

I have made written comments previously to the FCC on the dangers of media consolidation. Now, just days before the presidential election, Americans are getting another clear example of the dangers of media consolidation. The owners of Sinclair Broadcasting will force their member stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary, though it will really be a free political advertisement for the campaign to re-elect George W. Bush.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. The airing of "Stolen Honor", however ineffective it may prove to be toward the Sinclair's goal of getting George W. Bush re-elected, is also an attempt by the owners of Sinclair Broadcasting to frighten all citizens of the United States into giving up their First Amendment rights to free speech and other political freedoms guaranteed in the 1st Amendment to the Constitution (i.e., the right to protest, and the right to petition the government for a redress of grievances). What could be worse for the American public and for our democracy than this kind of threat to our civil liberties at the time of presidential elections?

When large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.